

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

January 28, 1961

Dear Mr. President:

I am enclosing a brief chronology of the principal events relating to Berlin which have occurred since the ending of the first Berlin blockade in 1949.

The period covered falls logically into two parts: that from the end of the blockade until November 1958, when the current "Berlin crisis" began; and the period of the crisis itself since that time.

The first period was characterized by the readjustment of relationships between the Western Allies and West Germany, between the Federal Republic and West Berlin, and between the USSR and East Germany. The last of these in particular set the stage for the Soviet efforts to dislodge the Allies from West Berlin which began in 1958.

Soviet tactics to force Western abandonment of Berlin which, with the measures taken by the West to counter them, dominate the second period, have gone through two general phases. The first was a direct threat to Allied access rights to West Berlin. This threat took the form of the stated intention of the USSR to sign a peace treaty with East Germany and turn over to the latter the control over Allied access to the city. In the second phase, which has developed since the abortive Summit meeting of May 1960, the Soviets have substituted a gradual de facto transfer to the East Germans of control over Berlin, and in this framework harassment has centered on West German-Berlin relations. A return to the earlier tactic may be expected and may in fact be heralded by Khrushchev's reiteration on January 6 in Moscow of his threat to sign a separate peace treaty.

Meanwhile, relative quiescence has prevailed since Western, particularly West German, countermeasures brought an easing of East German harassment of Berlin access late in 1960.

The President,
The White House.

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There are indications that Mr. Khrushchev will be returning to the Berlin question in due course, perhaps soon. The chronology will give you a brief outline of the past pending a full briefing.

Faithfully yours,

Dean Rusk

Dean Rusk

Enclosure:
Chronology.

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BERLIN CHRONOLOGY

SINCE THE END OF THE BERLIN BLOCKADE

1949

- May 4 UN Security Council Representatives of the US, UK, France and USSR issued a communique indicating agreement by their governments to remove by May 12 restrictions on communication, transport and trade between Berlin and the two zones of Germany, and to hold a Council of Foreign Ministers meeting to discuss Berlin.
- May 12 The Berlin blockade ended.
- June 20 The Sixth Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, meeting in Paris to consider Germany and Berlin, issued a communique agreeing to "maintain" the "New York Agreement of May 4, 1949" and to hold consultations for the purpose, i.e., of mitigating the effects of the division of Germany and Berlin, notably respecting trade, economic and financial relations, travel ... etc.
- September 21 The Federal Republic of Germany officially came into being with the entry into force of the Occupation Statute and the Charter of the Allied High Commission.
- October 7 The German Democratic Republic, with Berlin as its capital, was officially proclaimed.
- October 10 The Soviet Military Administration transferred administrative functions to the East German Government.

1950

- January 27 - February 1 The East German Government announced that Western traffic into or through the Soviet Zone or Soviet Sector would need permits from East Germany (January 27). Supervision of East-West boundaries in Germany was transferred by the Soviets to East Germany (February 1).
- October 1 The Constitution of Land Berlin entered into effect in West Berlin.

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1951

October 8

The Allied Commandants in Berlin agreed to a procedure whereby "the Berlin House of Representatives may take over a Federal law by means of a Mantelgesetz (cover law) which states that the provisions of the Federal Law are valid in Berlin". This, together with the "Third Transfer Law" of January 9, 1952, which defined the position of Berlin in the system of Federal Finance Administration, have been key elements in the legal relationship of Berlin and the Federal Republic.

1952

May 27

Following the signature in Bonn of the Contractual Agreements between the Western Powers and the Federal Republic, and concurrently with the signature of the European Defense Community Treaty in Paris, the three Western Foreign Ministers issued a declaration including the following reference to Berlin:

"The security and welfare of Berlin and the maintenance of the position of the three powers there are regarded by the three powers as essential elements of the peace of the free world in the present international situation. Accordingly, they will maintain armed forces within the territory of Berlin as long as their responsibilities require it. They therefore affirm that they will treat any attack against Berlin from any quarter as an attack upon their forces and themselves".

1953

June 16 - 17

Rioting took place in East Berlin and in the Soviet Zone against the Communist regime.

1955

May 5

The October 1954 Paris Agreements entered into force; the German Federal Republic thus became a sovereign country and a member of NATO.

In Berlin, the Three Powers issued the "Declaration on Berlin", which is the present basis for the relationships between the Germans and the occupying authorities in the city.

1955 cont'd.

March 30 -
May 20

Despite Western protests, East Germany imposed and maintained increases ranging from 100 percent to 1000 percent in tolls on Western German vehicles using highways in the Soviet Zone. They did not apply to Allied vehicles using the Helmstedt-Berlin autobahn.

September 20

East German and Soviet officials signed a treaty reaffirming the sovereignty of the German Democratic Republic (its sovereignty was first declared March 25, 1954), and in an exchange of letters the Soviets transferred to East Germany control over East German borders with the Federal Republic and West Berlin, and over access to Berlin (except, "temporarily", the movement of US, UK and French troop personnel and materiel).

October 19

The Bundestag, Lower House of the Federal German Parliament, met for the first time in West Berlin. Since then the Bundestag has met three times in Berlin (October of 1956, 1957 and 1958). In addition the Federal Assembly met in Berlin in 1954 and 1959 to elect the President of the Federal Republic.

The question arose in 1960 of a Bundestag session that year in Berlin. After much discussion, it was ultimately postponed and will probably be taken up again in early 1961.

1958

January 1

The USSR transferred to East Germany the right to document Western Allied officials for all travel through East Germany except as governed by agreements on Allied access to Berlin.

November 10

Khrushchev stated in Moscow the time had come to give up the remnants of the occupation regime in Berlin and to create "a normal atmosphere in the capital of the GDR".

1958 cont'd.:

- November 27 In notes to the US, UK, France and the Federal Republic of Germany, the USSR stated it regarded as null and void the September 12, 1944 and related agreements on the occupation of Berlin (the agreements also concerned the rest of Germany but were still significant only with respect to Berlin.) From these agreements proceeded Allied access and other rights in Berlin. The notes suggested a "free city" status for West Berlin, and stated the USSR would maintain the current access procedures for six months to allow time for negotiating a new status. If the period was not used for that purpose, the USSR would negotiate with East Germany the transfer to the latter of the functions "temporarily" performed by the Soviets under the agreements referred to.
- These notes touched off the "Berlin crisis", which in one degree or another has continued since then.
- December 7 Elections for the Berlin legislature gave the Socialist Party (SPD) 52.5 percent and the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) 37.6 percent. No other party received the five percent required to be represented in the legislature. (The Communist SED received 1.9 percent.) The resulting government was an SPD-CDU coalition.
- December 14 The Foreign Ministers of the US, UK and France, after discussing the Berlin question in Paris, stated they found the Soviet November 27 repudiation of its obligations unacceptable.
- December 16 The NATO Council, in a declaration on Berlin, associated itself with the December 14 Tripartite Statement. It also declared, i.e., that NATO member states could not approve a Berlin solution which jeopardized the right of the three western powers to remain in Berlin as long as their responsibilities required it, or which did not assure free access to the city.
- December 31 The US, UK and France replied to the Soviet November 27 note, stating they would continue to hold the USSR responsible for carrying out its obligations in Berlin. They stated, however, a willingness to discuss Berlin in the context of the German problem as a whole, though not under coercion of threats or ultimat.
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1959

January 10 In a note to the US, proposing a peace conference on Germany, the USSR rejected the Allied suggestion that Berlin be discussed in the context of the German problem.

February 16 The US proposed to the USSR a four-power Foreign Ministers Conference on all aspects of Germany.

April 4 A basic paper on Berlin Contingency Planning, prepared by a joint US-UK-French planning group, was approved by the three Governments. The group has since that time continued more detailed planning on various aspects of this paper.

April 4 The USSR protested the flight above 10,000 feet of an American military aircraft in the corridor to Berlin.

April 13 The US rejected the Soviet April 4 protest, stating it recognized no limitation on the altitude of such flights.

April 14 By a directive of this date, General Norstad established a Tripartite Staff to undertake military contingency planning for Berlin. This staff has the code name LIVE OAK.

May 11-
June 20; Following further note exchanges, the Foreign Ministers conference proposed by the US on February 16 was held at Geneva. The Western Powers advanced the Western Peace Plan for the achievement in phases of German reunification and a European security arrangement. After two weeks of inconclusive discussion of the all-German question, the Allies agreed to discuss Berlin out of the context of the German problem. The Allies and the USSR each advanced proposals for an interim solution of the Berlin problem, each proposal being rejected by the other side.

July 13-
August 5

September 26-27 In discussions at Camp David, Khrushchev and President Eisenhower agreed that negotiations would be reopened on Berlin, the former giving assurances that the Soviets would in the meanwhile take no unilateral action and the President agreeing the negotiations would not be indefinitely prolonged.

December 19-21 Western Heads of Government (US, UK, France and, in part, Germany) met in Paris to discuss matters relating to an East-West summit conference.

~~SECRET~~

1960

- May 4 The NATO Council issued a statement reaffirming its December 16, 1958 declaration on Berlin.
- May 16 The abortive Four Power Summit Meeting took place in Paris.
- May 20 Speaking in Berlin on the breakdown of the summit negotiations, Khrushchev stated that the summit conference would have to be postponed six to eight months, until after the US elections. With the postponement of the conference, he impliedly postponed any critical USSR action against the West in Berlin for that period.
- August 29 The East German Government announced the institution on August 31 of a special five-day restriction on the entry into East Berlin by residents of the Federal Republic and threatened to harass travel to West Berlin by West Germans attending meetings of an expellee group and a group representing relatives of war prisoners.
- September 8 The East German Government decreed that citizens of the Federal Republic required permits issued by East Germany to enter East Berlin.
- This was the most important of a number of actions since the Summit meeting designed to extend East German de facto control over West Berlin and concentrating in this respect on relations between the Federal Republic and West Berlin rather than on the Allied position in that city, which had in the past been the focus of harassment.
- September 11 The US, UK and France, as retaliation for the East German September 8 decree, suspended issuance of Temporary Travel Documents, required by East Germans traveling to Western countries which do not recognize the German Democratic Republic. After September 24, TTDs were issued only to certain limited categories of travelers.
- September 13 East Germany announced it would no longer accept West German passports "unlawfully issued" to West Berliners for travel to bloc countries; it would enter the visa on a special sheet to be attached to the identity card issued by West Berlin. (Polish and Czech representatives in West Berlin made similar announcements two days later, as did the USSR on September 28).
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1960 cont'd.:

- September 26 The USSR, in notes to the US, UK and France, supported East German control over West German travel to Berlin and asserted that Berlin air corridors can be used only to supply Allied garrisons.
- September 30 The Federal Republic announced cancellation of the Interzonal Trade Agreement with East Germany, effective December 31, 1960. This was in retaliation for the September 8 decree.
- December 29 Having achieved a normalization of traffic to, from and within Berlin, Federal Government officials announced the success of negotiations looking toward the putting into effect on January 1, 1961 of the Interzonal Trade Agreement.
- December 31 The USSR-Federal Republic trade agreement for 1960-63 was signed. The Federal Government had threatened not to sign unless there were included a clause providing that the terms of the agreement applied to Berlin. Eventually it settled for the same kind of tacit assurances to this effect which had been obtained at the time of the prior agreement.

1961

- January 6 Khrushchev, in a speech to Communist party organizations in Moscow, reiterated his threat to sign a separate peace treaty with East Germany.
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